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ABSTRACT

New Jersey has taken steps to improve vocational education programs and services in response to two state reports and the measurement and evaluation requirements of the reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-392). Among state initiatives is the Occupational Competency Project, a study of 100 occupations with high anticipated annual job openings. Competency tests (performance standards) generated through this project will be the basis for the measurement of performance, and tests will be developed or identified to determine how well vocational education projects are preparing individuals for employment. Federal guidelines for the development of such an accountability system are being incorporated into a state and local standards and measures system with the following components: (1) identification of measures (learning and labor market); (2) development of lists of skills/competencies; (3) development of assessment strategies; (4) standard setting; (5) assessment of students; and (6) evaluation. An Occupation Competency Panel will prepare recommendations for the statewide occupational competency assessment program. One flowchart and an outline of potential measures and standards are included. An appendix contains a suggested management plan (including requirements under statutory authority, tasks, status, and timelines) for development of an evaluation system that meets the intent of the Perkins Act. (SLD)

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HANDS-ON ASSESSMENT: BEYOND THE PENCIL AND PAPER IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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INTRODUCTION

In order for the economy to remain strong, viable and internationally competitive, the schools of this country must train a competent and qualified workforce who can enter the world of work upon high school graduation with the skills, competencies and attitudes necessary to be successful. Vocational education has been the traditional vehicle for job training in this country.

This roundtable discussion focuses on the New Jersey Department of Education's goal to improve vocational education programs and services through a mandate for excellence. Occupational competency assessment was a logical outgrowth of the "Report of the Panel on Secondary Vocational Education in New Jersey" and "Accountability for Student Achievement--The Commissioner's Response to the Recommendations of the Panel on Secondary Vocational Education in New Jersey." These two reports coupled with measurement and evaluation requirements in the newly reauthorized Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-392) provided the framework for continued accountability and program improvement needs in vocational education. Then Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman determined that:

> ... if change to the (vocational) delivery system is to occur, it will be brought about over time by job market demand and evaluation of program results. Modifications should be based on an evaluation of comprehensive, accurate data and each (vocational) delivery system should be measured by the same standards. In order to unify standards for all deliverers of vocational-technical education, a statewide system of accountability for student achievement is needed.

OVERVIEW OF THE OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCY PROJECT

The State of New Jersey has taken the lead in establishing a statewide system of standards and measures of performance through the development of a job placement accountability system as well as an Occupational Competencies Project and assessment testing process. The Statewide Committee of Practitioners will review, comment on and propose revisions to a draft state proposal which the State Board of Education will develop to meet the requirements of Section 115 of the Perkins II legislation.

With respect to the Occupational Competency Project, the staff began work by identifying 100 occupations to be studied. The occupations chosen were those with the highest anticipated annual job openings. During FY 1992, the project will continue the process of identifying and verifying competencies for these occupations. Three of the five groups of 20 occupations will see activity.

Thanks are expressed to two colleagues from the New Jersey State Department of Education, Carmela Joseph and Frederick L. Cappello, for their assistance in the development of the section on Standards and Measures. The work of the Occupational Competency Project Development Team as well as the Panel on Occupational Competency Assessment in New Jersey is gratefully acknowledged.

New Jersey's system of competency identification and verification is based on systems in use in a number of other states and the system used by states belonging to the Vocational-Technical Consortium of States (V-TECS). The steps in the process are as follows:

1. conduct research to identify existing resources in each occupational areas;
2. draft competency lists;
3. hold technical committee (workers and direct supervisors) meetings to verify duties/tasks;
4. hold educator panel (teachers from the occupational area) to verify duties and tasks and related academic skills;
5. conduct mail surveys of employers to verify duties/tasks and to identify entry-level tasks;
6. conduct mail surveys of educators to verify duties/tasks and related academic skills;
7. develop occupational cluster matrices from completed lists;
8. produce and disseminate final competency lists; and
9. provide implementation training.

Each list developed through this process will include related academic skills, both basic and advanced as well as entry-level and advanced job tasks.

The competency lists (performance standards) generated by the activities described above will be the basis for measurement of performance. Tests will be identified or developed to determine the extent to which vocational programs are providing the necessary instruction and experiences to prepare individuals for employment. The tests will contain measures of learning and competency gains for both work skill attainment/enhancement and related academic skills [P.L. 101-293, s114 (b) (1), s115 (B) (2) (B)].

The assessment will also include a review of placement into additional training or education, military service, or employment [s115 (b) (2) (D)].

OVERVIEW OF ISSUES RELATED TO STANDARDS AND MEASURES

The evaluation accountability mandate in the reauthorized Perkins legislation charges the state agency with the responsibility of developing and implementing an accountability system that documents the overall progress of vocational education students and programs.

In developing such a system, input, advice and technical counsel will be sought from a variety of entities having responsibility for work force readiness in New Jersey. The law requires that the state agency consult with its Committee of Practitioners in the design and development of measures and standards. The state will also reach out to other participants in the

vocational enterprise including the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission. Of over-arching concern, will be the development of a performance system that is credible and that reports and compares performance fairly.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education through the efforts of Gary Hoachlander as well as information provided by the U.S. Department of Education teleconference on standards and measures have formed the nucleus of guidelines for the development of a successful accountability system. These guidelines are summarized below:

I. Measures and Standards

Measures of performance and standards are not synonymous. A performance measure is a type of outcome deemed as an appropriate indicator for accountability and could include: student achievement test scores, program completion rates, competency gains and job placement rates. Performance standards on the other hand are levels of performance considered acceptable for particular measures. Examples include achievement test scores greater than 70 percent, program completion rates higher than 75 percent, mastery of an additional 25 occupational competencies in each semester, a job placement rate of 80 percent or higher. The determination of the degree to which a performance standard has been met, not met or exceeded relies on monitoring of the system.

II. Types of Measures

The legislation requires that states adopt one measure of learning and competency gains in academic skills and a measure of at least one of the following: competency attainment, job or work skill attainment, retention in school and placement. It should be noted that this is a minimum requirement and that the selection of more measures is highly desirable.

Measures of performance can reflect either learner outcomes or labor market outcomes. From a measurement point of view, it is also important to select some measures that can assess changes of performance over time.

Standards should also be set that will allow for interpretations of student growth and program success. Setting an absolute standard of expectancy of performance may in fact create a situation of admitting students to a program who are likely to do well and be successful.

III. Determining Standards

In the standards setting process, it is important to consider the following:

- Examine "best practices" in terms of what other states and agencies have already adopted.

- Involve business and industry in the process and identify what employers' expectations are for entry-level employees.

- Examine existing state standards which already may be in place for certain occupations which encompass either state licensure or certification.

In many cases, the state can rely on data and information for the accountability system that already exist and that are maintained by LEAs and postsecondary institutions.

IV. Parameters for the Accountability System: Who is accountable for what?

The reauthorized Perkins legislation does not speak to what level of performance needs to be monitored. Clearly, it would be of benefit to structure a system that reflects the many levels of performance to include: students, teachers, programs, institutions and districts. For example, student performance might be assessed mainly in terms of achievement and competency gains while programs may be judged on completion rate and institutions on dropout rates or high school graduation.

Example of a tiered accountability system

Student level	Assessment in terms of achievement and competency gains
Program level	Completion rate
Institutional level	Dropout rates or high school graduation

V. Accountability Systems must be credible

Any accountability system depends on a fair and accurate reporting and comparing of results. Normative comparisons need to be drawn. Accountability systems must incorporate statistical and methodological controls to ensure that appropriate comparisons are made and that appropriate inferences about performance are drawn based on information which is interpreted accurately and fairly.

VI. Components of a Good Accountability System

- The measures and standards must be clearly defined.

- The number of measures and standards should be manageable.

- The data for measuring performance indicators, must be reasonably accurate, timely and easy to measure.

- Measures and standards information must be provided regularly enough to make it useful.

STATE AND LOCAL STANDARDS AND MEASURES SYSTEM

The schematic which follows outlines the 6 components of the State and Local Standards and Measures System.

I. Identification of Measures (learning and labor market)

The first phase forms the corner-stone of the system. During phase one all measures which will become part of the accountability system will be identified. Both learning (page 8) and labor market (page 9) measures will be included. Consideration will also be given to the establishment of measures for special populations (page 10) cited in the law.

II. Development of Skills/Competencies

During this cycle, skills and competencies will be developed for a wide range of occupations. These competencies in addition to becoming a key component of the accountability system will also help schools develop or upgrade curricula to meet employers' standards.

III. Development of Measures/Assessment Strategies

This phase concentrates on the identification/development of appropriate assessment strategies which can be used to gauge performance.

IV. Setting Standards

This phase concerns itself with the setting of standards. In establishing standards (1) "best practices" will be reviewed; (2) industry's input and employers' expectations for entry level employees will be sought; and, (3) existing standards and state licensure and certification requirements will be reviewed.

V. Assessment of Students

This phase deals with the actual implementation of the assessment at the various levels defined in the comprehensive accountability system.

VI. Evaluation

This phase provides for the formative (process) and summative (product) monitoring of the implementation of the accountability system. Data gathered from the accountability system will be used by policy makers at various points in the feedback loop.

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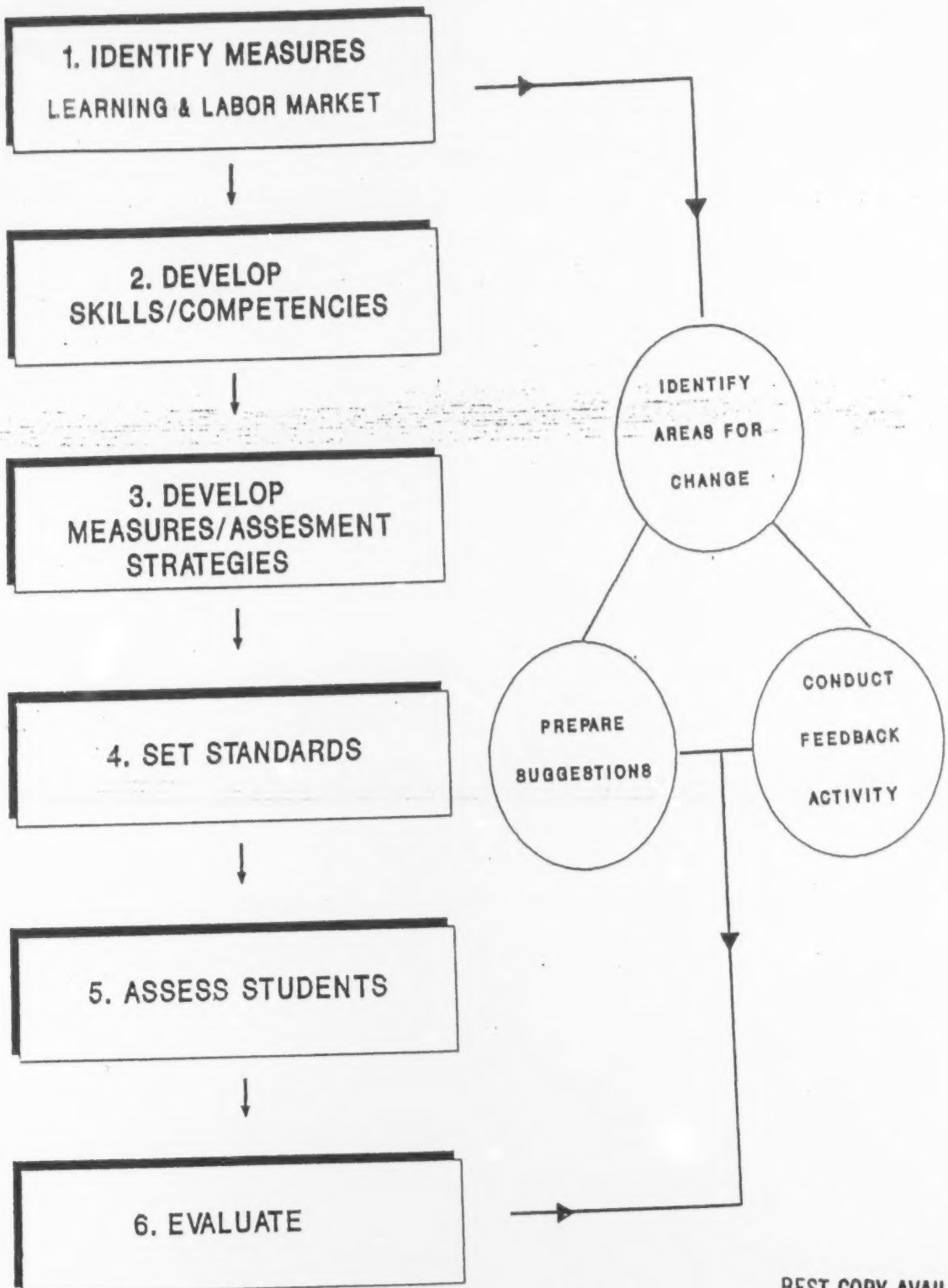
STATE AND LOCAL STANDARDS AND MEASURES SYSTEM



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OUTLINE OF POTENTIAL MEASURES AND STANDARDS

The outline on the following pages presents a listing of potential measures which could be considered in the development of the accountability system. Once the measures are agreed upon the standard setting process could begin.

EXAMPLE:

MEASURE	STANDARD
A. Academic achievement High School graduation rate	Ninety percent of students participating in vocational education should graduate with their class.

LEARNING MEASURE	STANDARD
A. Academic achievement academic achievement on standardized test	
1. Math	
2. Reading	
3. Writing	
4. Writing Sample	
5. Science	
B. Course completion rates	
C. High School graduation rates	
D. Degree or certificate completion rates	
E. Occupational competency measured by competency-based tests	
F. Other	

LABOR MARKET MEASURE	STANDARD
A. Time needed to secure employment	
B. Rate of quarterly earnings increase	
C. Entry-level wage/position	
D. Length of time employed in first job	
E. Employer or employee satisfaction	
F. Quarterly earnings	
G. Placement rates in:	
1. Job-related training	
2. Any job	
3. Further education	
4. The military	
H. Other	

MEASURES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS	STANDARDS
A. Ratio of the percentage of students with special needs enrolled in selected vocational education programs to the percentage of students without special needs enrolled in selected vocational education programs.	
B. Ratio of the percentage of students with special needs completing selected vocational education programs to the percentage of students without special needs completing selected vocational education programs.	
C. Ratio of percentage of students with special needs entering jobs related to training to the percentage of students without special needs entering jobs related to training.	
D. Other	

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCY PANEL

The New Jersey State Department of Education formed an occupational competency assessment panel which was charged with the responsibility of preparing recommendations for a statewide occupational competency assessment program which would include recommendations for the designing, selection, administration, and analysis of competency based assessment measures for vocational education programs in New Jersey.

Recommendations for occupational assessment in New Jersey include:

- Providing vocational education student outcome data that will be useful for program improvement;
- Utilizing a criterion-referenced assessment model and including assessment of all work-related affective behaviors and performance skills and a sampling of cognitive occupational competencies;

- Employing computer-assisted item banking to store, retrieve, and assemble the measurement instruments to be used;

- Assessing cognitive and affective learning by using indirect objective recognition type item until such time as it becomes economically and technologically feasible to use direct constructed-response items and items appropriate for computerized adaptive testing;

- Assessing the attainment of performance skills by using "hands-on" direct assessments that are conducted by vocational teachers as an integral component of the instructional program, verified by a third-party evaluation activity conducted at the end of the program, and supplemented with cognitive indirect assessments of these skills;

- Administering assessments of cognitive growth during specified time periods just prior to program completion or high school graduation, but in time for students to receive from appropriate school personnel, personal feedback as to their performance, (e.g., exemplary/acceptable/unacceptable);

- Utilizing locally administered group paper-and-pencil and computerized tests of cognitive achievement that are in keeping with the state-of the-art and the resources available to develop, implement, and maintain them;

- Using instrumentation that is based upon incumbent-verified task analysis and adopted, adapted, or developed by paid review/writing teams who have appropriate experience and expertise in vocational teaching, the subject matter specialty, educational measurement, and business or industry;

- Establishing policies and procedures for administering assessment instruments at the local level (e.g.,not assigning local personnel to proctor test of cognitive learning for students for whom they have provided instruction);

- Using assessment procedures and techniques presented in their individual educational plans (IEPs) when assessing the achievement of students with special needs and preparing separate summary reports for vocational students who have an IEP and those who do not;

- Utilizing appropriate criterion-referenced techniques for assessing the validity and reliability of tests and test items used to assess cognitive growth;

- Setting performance standards for performance skills assessments at levels consistent with business and industry expectations for entry-level workers and to ensure their validity and reliability, pilot testing performance skills assessment instrument with incumbent workers and recent program graduates who are know to be competent.

- Adhering to the APA/AERA/NCME Standards for Educational and Pyschologial Testing (1985) and including ongoing systematic efforts to a void test

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bias generally and specifically, biases relating to limited English proficiency, computer-assisted testing, and group and cultural differences;

- Contracting for the services of an outside evaluator to conduct continuous process and product focused evaluation activities which will provide data with regard to whether or not the competency assessment program meets its own goals and objectives; and,

- Considering establishing a third-party organization to administer the competency assessment with responsibility for developing, implementing, and improving the program.

POLICY QUESTIONS

In order to develop a comprehensive evaluation system certain policy questions need to be addressed. They are:

- What is meant by evaluation? There are a variety of definitions under the label EVALUATION. The Division of Vocational Education needs to agree on what is meant by evaluation; the levels of evaluation; and, the need for evaluation.

- Is the Division of Vocational Education required to evaluate all vocational programs, those funded with local funds as well as state and federal funds?

- Can we evaluate programs using a SAMPLE or must we evaluate every program?

- Adult vocational education programs, for the most part, do not result in job placement. Do we evaluate those programs labeled vocational but in reality are "hobby" courses, e.g. flower arranging, whitling, etc.?

- Do we evaluate career orientation and counseling programs that may or may not complement occupational programs?

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APPENDIX A

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The following pages highlight a suggested management plan for the development of a Comprehensive Evaluation system that meets the intent of Perkins II, and also will provide a basis for future vocational education program planning and implementation.

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STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Section 115 - State and Local Standards and Measures

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Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY - Each state board receiving funds under this Act shall develop and implement a statewide system of Core Standards and measures of performance for secondary and post-secondary vocational education programs. The State Committee of Practitioners shall review, comment on and propose revisions to a draft state proposal ... for a system of core standards and measures of performance for vocational programs by September 1992.	Implement state and local standards and measures occupational competencies project.	The development of the management plan for the project has been completed and implemented. Not all of the 100 occupations have been addressed, however the process for competency verification is in place. ISSUE: Not yet addressed by the project are those programs that are other than occupational.	On schedule
	Develop the comprehensive system. The state and local standards and measures project is only one aspect of the total system.	A plan is being prepared by P&E staff to develop the total system.	Preliminary Plan for Asst. Commissioner's review Oct. 4, 1991.

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STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Section 115 - State and Local Standards and Measures

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
(b) REQUIREMENTS - Each system developed under subsection (a) shall include: (1) measures of learning and competency gains, including student progress in the achievement of basic and more advanced academic skills;	Implement direct assessment of student achievement in the basic and more advanced academic skills for all vocational students both at the secondary and post-secondary levels.	A new more rigorous Grade 11 High School Proficieny Test (HSPT) was administered in a trial form in December of 1991. The new Grade 8 Early Warning Test (EWT) was given in April of 1991. Eleventh graders who took the HSPT in December do not have to pass the test in order to graduate. However, the results of this "due notice" administration will help the state determine how well the test measures the higher-level skills students will meet to compete in an increasingly competitive world. The state will administer the Grade 11 HSPT on a trail basis for the next two years. The grade 11 HSPT will become the official graduation exam in December 1993. The first students who will be required to pass it are students who graduate in June 1995 (this year's eighth graders). The HSPT measures basic and higher order skill attainment in mathematics, reading, writing and also includes a writing sample.	

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
(2) 1 or more measures of performance, which shall include only: (A) competency attainment; (B) job or work skill attainment or enhancement including student progress in achieving occupational skills necessary to obtain employment in the field for which the student has been prepared, including occupational skills in the industry the student is preparing to enter; (C) retention in school or completion of secondary school or its equivalent; and	Develop measures for learning outcomes to include: • gains in academic achievement or occupational competencies • program completion rates • high school graduation rates • passing higher level math or science courses or advanced vocational courses • pursuit of further education or training • school or program attendance.	For secondary school students, the assessment strategy for all intents and purposes is in place; however basic and more advanced academic skill assessment must be examined for those students enrolled in vocational programs at the postsecondary level. The Occupational Competencies Project is currently addressing several of the indicators of performance in that each competency list includes related academic skills in free enterprise/ entrepreneuership, language arts, mathematics and science. Skills in occupational areas have been identified to date but have not been matched to individual assessment tasks. Currently the Occupational Competencies Project has developed lists of duties and tasks for occupations that will form the foundation of any assessment system which will be state administered. It is anticipated that much of this work will be undertaken through the consortium of states that belong to	

STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Section 115 - State and Local Standards and Measures

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
(D) placement into additional training or education, military service, or employment;	Develop measures for labor market outcomes to include: • job placement (in related or unrelated jobs) • earnings • time to employment • employer satisfaction	V-TECS.	
(3) incentives or adjustments that are: (A) designed to encourage service to targeted groups or special populations; and (B) for each student, consistent with the student's individualized education program developed under section 614(a)(5) of the Education of the Handicapped Act, where appropriate; and	Develop data collection system for: • Handicapped individuals • Academically disadvantaged individuals - Limited English Proficient - Actual or potential dropouts from secondary/post-secondary institions - High school dropouts - Members of economically disadvantaged families - Migrants	In addition to the develop of a data collection system for all students enrolled in vocational programs including those members of special populations, it might be useful to develop measures such as: Ratio of the percentage of students with special needs enrolled in selected vocational education programs to the percentage of students without special needs enrolled in selected vocational education programs. Ratio of the percentage of students with special needs completing selected vocational education programs to the percentage of students without special needs completing selected vocational education programs.	

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
	• Displaced homemakers • Individuals participating in programs not traditionally taken by members of that sex • Individuals in correctional institutions	Ratio of percentage of students with special needs entering jobs related to training to the percentage of students without special needs entering jobs related to training.	
(4) procedures for using existing resources and methods developed in other programs receiving Federal assistance.	Develop a coordination strategy to avoid duplication of effort and to maximize resources.	The Occupational Competencies Project has made extensive use of existing resources and methods. The process itself was developed using information and materials from fourteen other states. Project staff and facilitators were trained in the process by V-TECS staff and members at no cost to the state. Each draft competency list is a compilation of lists from those already in use in New Jersey districts, V-TECS products and lists developed by other sources.	

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STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Section 115 - State and Local Standards and Measures

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
(c) **CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PROGRAMS** - In developing the standards and measures included in a system developed under subsection (a), the state board shall take into consideration: (1) standards and measures developed under job opportunities and basic skills training programs established and operated under a plan approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services that meets the requirements of section 402(a)(19) of the Social Security Act; and (2) standards prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under section 106 of the Job Training Partnership Act.	Develop draft lists of standards and measures cooperatively with DOL, JTPA; and Develop draft lists of standards and measures cooperatively with the DOH. Identify appropriate representation to assist in the development of the total system. • SCOP - ad hoc committee • consultant group • interagency coordination • other groups	The state and local standards and measures occupational competencies project has used JTPA materials in the development of draft lists. ISSUE: At this time the DOH has not been a part of the project. At the next SCOP meeting an ad hoc committee will be appointed to address the total system during the developmental stages. Appropriate status reports will be mailed to the consultant, interagency and other appropriate groups.	January, 1991 By Nov. 1, 1991 October 30, 1991

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Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
(d) INFORMATION PROVIDED BY STATE BOARD (1) The Committee shall make recommendations to the State board with respect to modifying standards and measures to be used under this section, based on information provided under paragraph (2). (2) To assist the Committee in formulating recommendations under paragraph (1), the State board shall provide to the committee information concerning differing types of standards and measurements, including-- (A) the advantages and disadvantages of each type of standard and measurement; (B) instances in which such standards and measures have been effective; and (C) instances in which such standards and measures have not been effective.	Reference (d)(2) MEASUREMENT: TYPE OF OUTCOME Develop measures for assessing program performance for secondary and post secondary that are: • clear and concise • reasonably accurate • timely • easy to measure • easy to retrieve by schools • compares performance fairly • more than 6, less than 12	//	

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
	Review and redefine current learning and labor market outcomes to insure their ability to meet the needs of Perkins, SOICC and the SETC for example: a. program enrollment: schools and correctional facilities • number enrolled • percent male and female • percent enrolled non-traditional • academic disadvantage • economic disadvantage • LEP • race/ethnicity • handicapped • single pregnant women • displaced homemaker linkages to: co-op apprentice tech-prep b. program completer: schools and correctional facilities • number completed • percent special population	Almost all of the date required is currently collected with the exception of: <u>Secondary</u> - non-traditional - single pregnant women - displaced homemakers - linkages <u>Adult</u> - non-traditional - disadvantaged (academically & economically) - LEP - handicapped - single pregnant women - linkages	

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STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Section 115 - State and Local Standards and Measures

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
	• percent male and female • percent non-traditional c. academic corollaries • increased math skills • increased science skills • attendance • school graduation rates • school dropout rates • acad/voc integration d. occupational competencies e. program follow-up • earnings • employer satisfaction • employment tracking • percent working/ related field • percent working/ unrelated field • percent continuing education • percent military • percent not employed • percent seeking work	He will be requesting social security numbers to link with wage data.	

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STATE RESPONSIBILITY: Section 115 - State and Local Standards and Measures

DRAFT

Requirements under Statutory Authority	Tasks	Status	Timelines
	STANDARD: LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE Develop quantative and qualitative standards for programs regarding: • philosophy/goals • administration/supervision • student population served • financial information • instructional program • instructional staff • guidance • support systems • evaluation • follow-up and linkages Develop performance standards for <u>students</u> for example: • standardized test scores • occupational competency gains Develop performance standards for <u>programs</u> for example: • completion & placement rates		

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